THE RELIGION OF J. KRISHNAMURTI

WITHOUT RITE

WITHOUT CHURCH

BY

THE REVEREND
J. TYSSUL DAVIES

SOME RECENT WORKS OF

J. KRISHNAMURTI

Let Understanding be the Law

The Purpose of Education

Life in Freedom

Life the Goal

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The Religion of J. Krishnamurti, without Rite, without Church *

I BELIEVE that, since Emerson's essay on Self-reliance, there has not appeared in the English language a more emphatic appeal to men to stand in their own strength than in the utterances of the young Hindu sannyasi, Mr. Jiddu Krishnamurti, spoken and published during the last two years. We must estimate his messages quite apart from any claims advanced on his behalf, but simply on their own merits.

He has cut himself free from all old associations, has dissolved the Order of the Star of

* This very interesting address, which we have received permission to publish, was delivered to the Theistic Church at the Aeolian Hall, Bond Street, London, on Sunday, November 17th, 1929.

which he was the Head, and affirms that he has no disciples and does not intend to have disciples. He is untrammelled, free, and he is out to make all others free. That is a gesture to which we all respond in eagerness, affection, admiration and pride. Those of you who were present and heard him speak in the Friends' Meeting House at Euston, who went without any pre-conception—though that was very difficult—heard an address so unpretentious, so sensible, so utterly unmarred by any partisanship, so universal in its appeal, so simple, so harmonious with the best thought of the ages, and yet so destructive of the old obsolete shibboleths of the churches, that it entirely removed from one's mind any apprehension of a man playing a rôle, filling a part, or running a concern. He proved to be quite unspoilt by the unusual adulation yielded to him and the ardent devotion ready to be offered to him. And the fact that he has refused that adulation, that he has rejected discipleship, that he has metaphorically flung down and trampled upon the altars, already smoking with the incense of adoration, and that the bitterest things he

has said, and the harshest things, were said to those who were most solicitous to render him reverence, proves his sincerity, his uncompromising integrity, his 'incorruptibility' —a word so often on his lips. Whatever the place he is destined to fill, to occupy among the prophets, I believe he is out for the square deal; and, though he is all gentleness, when veracity demands he is obedient to the necessity of hurting even his own friends. That seems to me one of the chief testimonies to his singleness of purpose—the way in which he has imperilled every support, which leadership, as a rule, is so anxious to preserve. He risks all popularity by his outspoken frankness. What kind of man is this who does not want popularity, who does not want anything that the world can give him? I ask you to put that question today to your own minds. These are some of the things that he has said to his own friends:

> *You have come here to twist what I have to say to your particular theories, your particular dogmas, your particular beliefs.*

The majority of you also are filled with the desire to know who is speaking—if it is Krishnamurti or some other through him. As I have said over and over again, since you know neither me nor the other, your judgment is without value.

This was said not to the general public ; this was said to the members of the Order of the Star gathered around him. Again :

The majority of you who come to the Camp have a private collection of gods and you want to add me to your collection. I know this sounds funny, but the fact is ridiculously childish.

Again :

The majority of you are so embalmed in your newly acquired prejudices that you hope that I shall comfortably fit into your scheme of things. . . . These are the main reasons which have prompted you to come here . . . only wanting your little

longings satisfied. They can never be satisfied, because they are vain, useless. You want to know what is the right kind of ceremony you should perform, the right creed to believe, the right god to worship. . . . With these I have nothing whatever to do. They are absolutely of no value.

None of these things, from his point of view, are of value. They are not among the essential things of life. He goes further than that. And remember it applies to what we believe here as well—all theists as well as all theosophists. In fact, those things keep men away from truth ; they fetter them in the effort of attaining freedom, happiness, in life. The great words constantly upon his lips are: 'Happiness,' 'Freedom,' 'Life'—not the words you find in churches, not 'Prayer,' 'God,' 'Sacrifice'. No, no. 'Life,' that is the word. It is something greater than God.

These, according to him, are the great essentials. These belong to the inner kingdom of man's soul. These spring from reality,

whereas worship of gods, rites, ceremonies, prayers, reverence for great personalities, prophets and mediators, shrines, temples, churches, all these are founded upon the desire to seek salvation from outside, to get it from an external thing. He is out to destroy all that. Consider what that means. I am telling you these things because I want you to realise that you cannot ignore Krishnamurti, as many of you have done. He is here. He is speaking. You have to listen, whether you agree or not. He is not to be ignored by any means. Consider what his essential doctrine means. It means that all the essential forms of Christianity, of Buddhism, of Hinduism, of every kind of organised faith, are swept off the board; that is what it means. But if you are inclined to rejoice at this destruction, remember it applies equally to your own church, your own society, to which you have attached yourself. As long as you regard these institutions as means to an end, as of some service towards fellowship, as a slight help or prop; as long as you regard the Theistic Church or Theosophical Society as something advantageous and helpful,

and not essential, it is all right for you. You don't expect your church to effect your salvation. You don't expect your church to do for you what you cannot do for yourselves through your own private endeavour. He says that you may have these little crutches to maintain you in your trouble if you honestly acknowledge that you are using crutches. Yet all the while he is urging men to do without crutches, to face the storm, to destroy fear, to dissolve the heritage of the past, and hope for the future by making the achievement *now*. Most people postpone their salvation: he wants them to undertake it at once.

This appeal means—all words mean—different things for different people. He warns us against this. Every word has diverse associations for each one of us. I don't know therefore what it will mean to you to be told that your concern should be not with habits and fears, not with beliefs and faiths, not with rites and duties, not with worship and gods, but with Life itself. The force of this

declaration is that, while you believe in something or somebody outside you, while you believe in a Bible or in a Christ, or in a Master, or in a Saviour, you are looking in the wrong place; you are looking without. While you reverence the great Teachers of the past you are looking back; while you think of your life hereafter you are looking forward into the future; you are postponing the issue; you are putting it off; whereas the magical time is now. That is his cry. And if you say to him, if you object—as people have objected—"I have no true greatness within me. I must rule my life by the precepts of the Christ, or by the five truths of the Buddha, or by the counsels of Mahomet; these things were given for our edification"; you are met by a most destructive scepticism and told what I suspect is the real fact: "I doubt whether the people of the past have ever given rules of conduct or systems of ethics. It is generally their disciples who shape the systems and lay down the rules of conduct. Really great teachers don't lay down laws. They want to set men free; and you cannot be set free by systems of ethics

or by laws of conduct. Systems of ethics are founded by man for the right conduct of his neighbours, and never for himself." You see, then, what is his point. We cannot imagine a great teacher like the Christ—sweeping away, as he did, the whole ethical code of his day with that imperious: " It was said of old, but I say unto you . . ." contradicting these ancient rules and seizing every opportunity of violating them; putting in their place an inner code, a spring of action, a motive of Love. You cannot imagine a man like Christ doing that, and then manufacturing another code, another decalogue, or promulgating another Leviticus. It is the legislators who draw up the laws, the czars who publish edicts, the popes who issue bulls. The whole world is packed with laws, and these require a complicated machinery, a whole army of officials, sheriffs, judges, lawyers, bailiffs, to carry them out. But what is it that the prophets do? The business of the prophet is to awaken men to a sense of the god within, whence all religions and worships spring. A prophet then has no religion. A prophet does not come to impose a new code, to create a new

authority, but rather to release man from all codes, all dependence upon authority, to make him strong in his own divine strength.

Once again such a cry, like the voice crying in the wilderness heard of yore, is repeated in our own day. What is the justification for this plea, what is the defence for it, what is the philosophy of it? Here I must speak as a Vedantist. No great soul has appeared in India during the last three thousand years that has not accepted the call of the teaching of the Upanishads, the spirit of the oldest and most enduring religious philosophy, based not on speculation but on real experience, and summed up in three words. That doctrine is the fulcrum upon which every lever of spiritual appeal has ever been made from India to move the world. The ancient Aryan formula sums up the researches of all the greater *Rishis*. Generations of men delved deep to find this, great men of our great Aryan race, the creators of our Aryan heritage. These men came back life after life to prosecute their earnest search. They sacrificed everything to obtain the secret.

Behind it is a host of pioneers in the most difficult enterprise on earth, men who died in this search for truth.

So it was not merely speculation, it was not the spirit of curiosity, that animated these pioneers, it was the profoundest passion of all passions, the deepest yearning of the spirit to know what it is, and whence it is, and why it is and where it is going. That has been the great quest of all ages, and the answer to that asking, the answer to that seeking is "Thou art That," *Tat Tvam Asi.* A yogi who had taken the vow of silence, and for fifteen years had never spoken, during the Indian Mutiny was stabbed to death by a soldier, and he broke his silence to repeat these words: "Thou also art That," dying with the affirmation of the divinity of his own murderer. This is the secret of the greatest philosophy that the world has known ; it is on this foundation that all the greater *rishis* of the East have built the essential divinity of man. "Thou art That." "Thou art God." "Thou art Brahman." Man in his deepest

essence is identical with the Cosmic Spirit, with the Absolute Infinite behind all things, not a part of God, not an emanation of God, but the Reality itself, birthless and deathless and changeless. When man attains this knowledge, realises it in all its power, he becomes one with That. Such is the teaching of India.

Here you have it again, brought to our notice in Western language, by a Hindu Teacher in our own day. "To know this eternal Being that each one of us in every enduring sense and intrinsically is, is to end sorrow, is to secure lasting happiness, is to reach the goal of effort." Glimpses of this vast understanding, of this cosmic consciousness, have come to not a few, but where are they who have been able to say "I have attained"? "My father and I are one?" "I am the Beloved; the Beloved is Me?" "I am God?" Krishnamurti has announced this great thing of himself, this consummation of human development in his own personal evolution. Instead then of doing the expected thing, instead of doing the promised thing, he has fallen back on

the practice of the Hindu *rishis*. Instead of saying "I am the World Teacher. I am the Christ. I am the Messenger of God. I am one of the Masters," he has done something which makes all these claims paltry and personal and temporary. He has proclaimed anew that which was announced by the greater *rishis* and is heard only once in a thousand years. "I am He," he has said. "The Beloved and I are one." "I am the Whole."

And now what is his task? All men are Atman, are Divine Spirit, are God in essence. All men are potentially Brahman. All men can attain. What one man can do, all men can do. That is his message, the ancient message re-delivered in the age in which we live. He does not use terms like 'God,' like 'Dharma,' for these have their ineradicable associations. His word is 'Life'. "O Life, O Beloved. In Thee alone is Eternal Love. In Thee alone is the everlasting spring of thought." So he sings. And in reading his poems, in reading his addresses and his

parables and his rhapsodies, I seem to hear once again the voice of Kabir; I seem to see the penetrating wisdom of Yajnavalkya; I seem to hear again the tenderness of Buddha; I hear again the harshness of the Galilean speaking to the Pharisees; I hear again the simplicity of Ramakrishna. I do not know who he is, or what he is, but I hear that ancient voice repeated again. That is the first, that is the last message of all religions: "I am He."

I hope it is true he has attained. It is an incredible privilege to welcome in the flesh one who has attained. I do not know if it is true, but if it is the truth, it is the most magnificent thing that could have happened in any age to any human being.

Concerning the Hebrew prophets, when one appeared, the first thing asked was: What is his slogan? What is his motto? Of John the Baptist it was said his motto was: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." So Krishnamurti had at first for his motto 'The

Kingdom of Happiness'. Man was meant for happiness, hapiness is possible for all men; simply remove the things that bar you from happiness. So now he cries: "Be in love with Life." Be in love with Life. Be in love with yourself. Recall some of the things that have been emphasised in religions and compare them with this new teaching. "Fulfil the law," it was said; "Obey your *guru*," "Carry out your *dharma*," "Break your fetters," it was said; "Believe," "Have faith," "Worship the one true God," it was said; "Pray five times a day," "Study the scriptures," it was said. These now seem rather flat in comparison with "*Be in love with Life.*" Here comes a refreshing voice bidding us "Throw all these things away". And his excuse is this. "Because I have leaned on crutches to support me I know the uselessness of crutches. Because I know that your comforts only weaken you I tell you to throw them away. Because I have found a simple and direct path, I will tell you of it." But what is this direct way? This is the difficulty I have found in trying to understand his teaching. What is this direct path? He

offers a short cut to happiness. The method is that recommended by Matthew Arnold in one of his poems, *Youth to Man*: "Sink to thyself, O Youth!" You are not to seek escape from life's sorrows, from vexations, sufferings, troubles, but to endure these things while you enter into that region where these things don't count. What about the bonds imposed upon us by our families, our citizenship, our nationality? You shall not renounce these obligations. What about business success? If you want business success, he says, if you want to make yourself famous, go and do it, put your heart into it; but if, instead of that, you want to attain the truth, if you want to get lasting happiness, then put your heart into that. However, he distinctly says that we are not to use the higher to serve the lower, so the whole modern method of thinking health and wealth is condemned.

Because, he says, you want to avoid all struggle, all pain, all sorrow, you have all your shelters of comfort, your gods, temples, churches, religions. It is in the process of transmutation

that the truth lies and not in mere attainment. But surely this process of attainment is very slow and gradual, whereas his words seem to imply that there is a more simple and direct method. He leaps over the long pilgrimage. By making yourself one with this Life, by identifying yourself with it, you quickly arrive ; you value everything only as leading you to that Life ; everything by comparison becomes trivial and unimportant. He cannot understand why men do not put into this supreme quest, into this wonderful thing which brings the whole world to our feet, the energy they put into playing golf, into business and love affairs. He suggests that there is a short way of effecting this by a kind of " grand slam ". You can suddenly divest yourself of all reliance on outward things, you can break the shackles, a sort of inward stripping, a sort of plunging into the sea. Once you alter the self you alter the whole world. Perfection of life, he says, is not progressive. That may become true after a hundred thousand lives. Man through exhaustion of experience learns the uselessness of all

gurus, masters, world-teachers, *rishis*, paths of discipleship, and finds within himself that which makes them all null and void. He leaps into the cosmic life; he finds himself free, glorious, ecstatic. He goes back to his friends and says: "Your ways are too long, too complicated, unnecessary. Throw them over. Leap; plunge into the abyss of life. Why need you worship?" That is how it strikes me. If it took him a hundred thousand lives to find that out, how are the people who are still in their fifty-thousandth, or their ten thousandth life, to realise this truth which it took him all that time to discover? He bears witness in the hope that it may awaken some. "I cannot set you free; you must free yourself. My business is to awaken you, to urge you to that freedom. I cannot really help you, but I can make that perception clear to you, so that you may, out of your own strength, struggle for it and become men free and unconditioned." I must leave that with you. That is the farthest help he can give you. Again, in throwing you back upon yourself, in depriving you of inspired

book and inspired teacher, of master and lord, of priest and prophet, of holy writ and holy church, in stripping you naked to the storm, in flinging you bare upon the mosaic pavement of the temple of life, he is giving you back a million times more than he takes away. He is giving you back your greatest treasure, because he is giving you back your freedom and your lost self. He is giving you back your strength and your fortitude. He is giving you back your God whom you thought to be outside you, your universe with all its stars and wonders and vast spaces. He is giving you back your heaven, your dream of the ages, your quest of a myriad lives. He is giving you back the joy of the morning stars. He is giving you back the goal of aeons of strife. He is giving you back the Beloved, God, That, the Whole.

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